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## A WORD ON FARMING.

WE have been favoured with the following communication from one who has had much experience as a practical agriculturist, and whose remarks on the relation of crops to soil, and *vice versa*, will, we believe, be of value to many of our readers.

There are various things that farmers presently wish for. Most of them desire a reduction of rent, better seasons, higher prices for farm-produce, and the American 'anywhere out of the world,' or at least out of the British market. Reduction of rent many have got already; but the necessity for importing foreign grain will never grow less till farmers themselves learn to 'make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before.' Better seasons we cannot command; and our only hope is that Meteorological Science may in time enable us to foresee with a tolerable degree of certainty the kind of seasons that may be expected. Higher prices we are not likely to have, and nobody wishes for them but the farmers; and their wishes in this particular, therefore, will not help them out of their troubles. What farmers want is not only sunlight, but the light of science. A country man and a cultivator of the soil, we have all our life long associated with farmers, land-agents, and landlords, and we unhesitatingly say that the present amount of farm-produce taken from the soil is not more, and we think less, than two-thirds of what it might and ought to be.

What the farmer wants to know is the geological formation on which his farm rests. He knows that some soils are naturally fertile and others barren. He may have heard that wheat demands phosphoric acid; potatoes, potash; and turnips, lime; but whether he be on trap soil, calcareous soil, or, better still, a combination, he may not know; but he ought to know. If he is on trap, or on a soil having trap for its basis, he will know that potatoes will prove a paying crop rather than turnips; and that if he is

on limestone, turnips will probably form the most lucrative crop. If he is on the fertile New or Old Red Sandstone, he will know that wheat may be grown again and again, with artificial help, without the soil being materially impoverished. What the average farmer does not know is, the chemical element or combination of elements his land is rich in, and the manurial dressings that he ought to apply or withhold. Nor does he know what his soil is deficient in, and what it therefore specially wants. Scores of farmers have applied nitrate of soda to land that had an inexhaustible supply of soda, and while thus throwing away their money, have condemned artificial manures! Hundreds have land that is infertile simply because soda is absent, or present in deficient quantities; and they yet fail to apply it. Lime is continually being added to land that has enough in itself; other lands want it so badly that they produce poor crops and grasses of inferior nutritive value, only wanting lime to be made productive and have their produce changed. Almost all soils contain more silica than will ever be removed, yet landlords insist—and farmers consent—that straw, which in the market would bring money to its owner's purse, shall be rotted into a manure of no particular value!

What the farmer wants to know is the chemistry of the plants he grows; the animals he feeds, and the foods they eat; the soil he cultivates, and the manures he uses. It is, for instance, a sad waste of capital to apply nitrate of soda to plants that require potash; or potash to plants that want lime; or phosphoric acid where it may already exist. It is failing to make the most of everything, to feed hard-working horses on fattening foods, while their muscles starve; and full-fledged fattening beasts on highly nitrogenous food, instead of on food that would cause a rapid gain in weight.

Farmers, landlords, and land-agents need to learn that plants take only *mineral* matters and nitrogen from the soil, and therefore need only these added, to maintain them in continued and

increasing fertility. It is a tremendous and a costly mistake to imagine that the carbon, the hydrogen, and oxygen which constitute the bulk of all crops, come from the soil, or constitute property when buried in it. It might help the landlord's rent, and leave a balance for the farmer's pocket, if they could be brought to understand that the carbon comes wholly, or practically so, from the carbonic acid which exists in the air in sufficient though small quantity, and which is being as continually extracted from the air by the waving cornfields and the towering forest trees, as it is as constantly being restored from every decaying organic substance, from every fire, every furnace, and every lung. The hydrogen and oxygen the plants find in water; and the carbon of the rotting straw, though it adds humus to the soil, furnishes it with no plant-food. In short, the burying of straw is a most unprofitable business; yet the landlord insists on it, because he believes he secures the return of the more valuable part of what the crops remove. As a matter of fact, that goes, never to return, in the grain.

The wealth of every landlord consists in the particular minerals his estate affords; and the farmer as truly works up and removes the mineral wealth, as does the lessee of a coal-seam, a bed of paraffin shale or a vein of iron ore. The idea that land-wealth consists in the amount of the *farmyard manure* in the soil, and that the land would be useless and valueless if it were gone, is a mistake that impoverishes the nation to the extent of millions yearly. Land-wealth consists partly of the various salts on which plants feed, and this depends on the geological constitution of the soil. The amount of plant-food available on any given soil is very small; and whether soil is naturally poor or rich in this plant-food depends on whether the soil contains—locked up in the grains of rock of which all soils are composed—much or little sustenance for plants; and whether what it does contain can be readily liberated by cultivation, exposure to the elements, or dissolved out by the acids in the soil, or the acids which the roots of plants secrete. The yearly amount thus liberated is all a farmer can take from the soil; hence it is a great mistake to suppose that particular ways of cropping permanently impoverish soil. Unless what the soil is deficient in be put there by the farmer, he, rather than the landlord, will be made poor. 'Condition' is only temporary enrichment; hence a poor soil cannot be permanently enriched.

Till the landlord has ascertained by chemical analysis the amount his soil contains of potash, phosphoric acid, lime, soda, magnesia, and the other less important elements found in plants, he will never exactly know the letting value of his farms. And not, till then, will he be able to say to his tenant what manures must be bought and what crops raised; neither till then, will the farmer know what he is buying, nor be able to lease a farm on sound commercial principles. Till then, he will never know what to buy and what to raise; for he will hardly be sure whether his land can grow potatoes continuously, or grain continuously, or whether the old-fashioned rotation will suit best.

Farmers and landlords generally require to learn

that on large breadths of land, corn may be grown profitably at a minimum of expense, because only a few substances need to be applied artificially, the soil furnishing the rest. Above all, they need to learn that what is carried off in the grain cannot be returned to the soil in the straw. They need to know that phosphoric acid, potash, lime, &c., have been for generations carried away and never returned; and that superphosphate of lime, sulphate of potash, and nitric acid, in small quantities, along with the waste products of the farm, would in ever so many cases restore what has been taken away, much better and more economically than by the application of straw-manure, which simply means the destruction of straw. The straw furnishes chiefly what the soil is in all probability already rich in—silica. It follows then, that the money which stable-keepers in towns, paper-manufacturers, &c., pay over to the Dutchman for straw, might be divided between the landlord and the farmer, to the advantage of both; and their want of knowledge alone prevents the consummation of this desirable state of matters. Then the landlord's rents would go up, and the farmer's capital increase, thus enabling the former to work improvements which now stand over. The farmer would be able to furnish abundance of the plant-food wanted, and so secure better crops—thus profiting doubly.

'Waste not, want not,' is a trite and forcible expression which is in the mouth of every one. As a nation, we are guilty of a frightful amount of waste. The farmer and the whole nation want the sewage—which now abominably pollutes our rivers, which generates disease-raising germs in the sewer-pipes, and frequently makes victims of men—turned upon our half-barren fields, in order to change them into fields of the greatest fertility. Dried clay and charred peat not only deodorise but render altogether innocuous any unpleasantness possessed by sewage, and in themselves are valuable improvers of soil. Many soils pay badly for want of clay in their body to hold the applied manurial matter—the sand allowing the rain to wash it out. What better manure or permanent improver could any one invent than clay-treated sewage? Much clay land is ill to work because of its adhesiveness—what better corrective could be invented than charred peat? Moreover, sewage contains the very matters which our fields want; that of which they have been so long robbed; and for want of which, they are below a proper standard of fertility; the very essence of grain, and in great part formed from it.

Till science and economy go hand in hand in farming, it will never pay; with these, no farmer need fear competition, and the landed interest will again look up. The present state cannot continue, for it is not paying. A better state of things must ensue, for it, though on far too small a scale, is paying even now; and continued adversity will cause the farmers and landlords to adopt a system they could once, but cannot now, afford to neglect.

The farming interest demands a Minister of Agriculture, and the establishment of Agricultural Colleges to impart a scientific education in the principles of agricultural chemistry. At present, there are few schools for farmers' and landlords' sons; hence the landed interest, and still more the

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nation, suffers. New land-laws may be needed; security from the ravages of game is needed; freedom of contract; free trade in land and in farm-produce is needed; but above all, and beyond all, farmers and landlords need 'more light.' Free trade in land means much more in reality than it does in the mouths of those who repeat a mere parrot cry.

The light shines now that would guide British agriculture into a profitable course, but only a few walk in it. Meanwhile, it is for farmers to gather from books\* which deal with agricultural science—and these are plentiful—the knowledge that ought to be spread broadcast by teachers; and when once he *knows* his wants, his wishes will be listened to, and the necessary alterations in the law will in all human probability be granted.

## VALENTINE STRANGE.

A STORY OF THE PRIMROSE WAY.

CHAPTER XIII.—'THAT COIN IS MARKED,' SAID HIRAM SERIOUSLY; 'I SHAN'T TAKE ANOTHER.'

HIRAM went back to work, and plotted all day how to force Fortune to his own pattern, and thought of many ways, though none of them seemed to answer. In his studies of the daily papers, he came again and again upon the phrase, 'Plans and particulars sent free on application'; and as an example of the direction his thoughts continually took, I give the scheme which this suggested to him. 'S'posin' now,' said Hiram to himself, hanging behind his 'bus, and turning this fancy over, 'I was to take a bureau, and make a list of every one of these coons, and send a letter to each of 'em.—"SEARCH & Co.'s *Advertising Office*.—MISTER. Be so good as send to us in future all plans and particulars of sales by your noted firm.—Yourn truly, HIRAM K. SEARCH & Co." Reckon theer's a thousand on 'em. That takes five pound to post 'em all. One expense an' done with. Reckon, again, theer's an average of one sale a day, an' each packet weighs four ounces, what with postin'-bills, auctioneers' catalogues, an' wrappers. That's two hundred an' fifty pound-weight; fifteen hundred pound-weight a week. Sell it for waste to the paper-mills at a farthin' a pound—that's a trifle over thirty shillin' a week, English money.' Having completed this calculation, Hiram smiled. 'Thirty shillin' a week. That's so. An' when you've cleared your expenses, if you do, you air provided for by a government which is proud to recognise financial talent. Pro-vided for, say at Portland or some other ekally attractive quarters, for at least five years. No; my inventive young friend; we will not perform in that partic'lar show.'

But there was no possible financial enterprise in the direction of which Hiram did not at one time or another cast his thoughts.

A week after the holiday, he went home to his lodgings at the usual hour, and was surprised to find a light in two of the front windows. Entering with a presentiment of evil on his mind, he

encountered Mary, standing at the door with a candle in her hand. 'Mr Search,' she whispered. 'Hiram,' he said, correcting her lightly, though he could see that some trouble weighed upon her. '—What's the matter?'

'I sat up to see you,' she said hesitatingly, 'to ask you'—

'Yes, my dear,' said Hiram, taking the candle in his hand.—'To ask me'—

'Oh, Mr Search,' she whispered, in such evident distress that it pained him to see it, 'I scarcely know how to ask you. You have been so good, and we have tried your kindness so often'—

'Mary,' said Hiram, putting his arm round her waist, 'don't you lose my respect for you. I won't have you talkin' nonsense. You air naturally the wisest as well as the prettiest little gell in London, an' I don't want you to fall into any ridic'lousnesses.—Now, my dear?'

'Hiram,' she began again—and he, with a nod of bright approval and a little pressure of the arm which encircled her waist, bent down to listen—'mother is ill, seriously ill.'

'Dear, now!' said Hiram gently, drawing her nearer to him.

'We are so miserably poor, just now!' said the girl, speaking softly still, but with difficulty through her fast-rising tears. 'The doctor ordered quinine wine and beef-tea.'

'Did he, now?' asked Hiram, patting the wet cheek.

'And I had to pawn a jacket and some other things to get them; and now they are gone; and I have no more money, and nothing left to take'—

'My darlin',' said Hiram pitifully.

'And will you,' she whispered, sobbing still, 'let us have the week's rent in advance, this once? I am so ashamed to ask you'—she would have drawn away from him; but his arm restrained her—'you have been so good and generous ever since you came.'

'Now, now, now,' said Hiram, patting the wet cheek again, 'I wish I was a millionaire; but I ain't. You wait a minute, an' I'll be down again.' He left her, and mounted the stairs with long silent strides, and returned in a few minutes with a lean chamois leather purse. 'It's only nine shillin',' said he mournfully; 'but I shall have more by-an'-by.' He placed his hand above her lips, when she would have thanked him. 'You just leave a note for me, if you should want me in the mornin'.—How long has she been ailin'?'

'Ever since the day we went out together,' the girl answered.

'Mebbe a bit tired,' said Hiram soothingly.—'Don't you fret, my pretty. An' if you want anythin', ask me fur it, an' if I can get it, you shall have it; an' if you don't, I'll never forgive you, not if you was to love me all your lifetime as well as I love you.—An' that,' added Hiram to himself, 'you never will, because why on airth should you?' He left her there with a kiss, and mounted again to his own room, where, by the light of a single dim candle, he sat solemnly down at a small green-painted deal table, and surveyed himself in an oblong mirror some eight inches by six. It was not vanity which taught him thus to gaze upon himself. 'Tain't your face an' figger, Hiram, my lad, that makes the

\* The following are examples of works which may with advantage be consulted: *Johnston's Agricultural Chemistry*; *Manures*, how to make, buy, and use them; and Professor Tanner's *First Principles of Agriculture*.

little gell cling to you, you fortioitous concourse of disadvantageous anatomical circumstances! Wall, that's a pretty phrase, I vow, an' it has the merit o' bein' fairly descriptive. Yes, sir. It pokes you up in the identical cave you live in. You air a fortioitous concourse of disadvantageous anatomical circumstances. That, sir, is your personal ticket. An' yet, Hiram,' he continued, laying down the mirror, and rubbing his lean cheek thoughtfully with the tips of his fingers, 'it ain't the prettiest men as the best gells care for. No, sir. Grit tells. An' Hiram, you're takin' noo responsibilities, an' grit is wanted. Now I tell you, sir, an' I tell you straight, that if theer is in your ugly figger one soft place, it's got to be macadam'd; fur I am not goin' to let that poor little creetur mire her feet by walkin' over any swampy spots in you. That may be figgerative; but my meanin's clear. You air not a sentimental party, Hiram, an' so fur as I know you, you never wrote a set o' verses in your life; but you know as well as I do, theer's nothin' in the world, no blessin' in it, like a good woman's love. An' how you got it, I dunno, but got it you have. Take care of it; be worthy of it, Hiram, an' your personal appearance will not count. An honest man, if he's as ornery-lookin' as Zebedee Pitman, can give Apoller pints, an' then knock chunks off him.' And with this moral reflection, Hiram began slowly and gravely to disrobe, and in a few minutes was sound asleep.

There was no note for Hiram in the morning; but he wrote and left upon the kitchen table a small missive, asking that news of the patient's progress should be left for him at night. Just three words answered this, 'Mother is better,' written in a thin hand, upon a scrap of letter-paper; but in the very dead and hollow of the following night, Hiram, always a light sleeper, was awakened by a creaking sound; and sitting upright in the dark, listened. Light footsteps went hastily to and fro, and were lost on the carpeting of the lower room. Then Hiram heard a voice groaning; and having struck a light, he hurried on his clothes, and went out to see what was the matter. Mary, with a scared face, was coming up the stair when she caught sight of him.

'Is she worse?' he asked. 'You want a doctor. Tell me where he lives?' Armed with the doctor's address, he was away at full speed, rang up the medical man, and brought him home. The doctor kept a small dispensary in a poor and crowded neighbourhood. Poverty and sickness were so common in his locality that he had grown somewhat hard.

'My fee,' he said, as they walked together, 'is five shillings.'

'Very well,' said Hiram sadly.

'I can't afford,' said the poor medico, 'to come for less at such a time of night.'

'Very well,' said Hiram again; and they walked on in silence through the sleeping streets. Reaching the house, Hiram opened the door with his latchkey, and sat down in the darkness of the lower room to wait. In a few minutes, he heard the medical man descending, and went into the narrow hall, faintly illumined by a street lamp, to meet him. 'How is she?'

'Come with me,' was the answer, 'and I will

give you a mixture.' Again they passed into the streets together. 'Relatives of yours?' asked the doctor as they walked, nodding his head backwards towards the house.

'No,' said Hiram; 'I'm only a lodger there. How is she?'

'It's a gone case, I should say,' returned the doctor. 'There's just a chance for her, and that's all.'

Hiram made no answer; and they reached the dispensary in silence; and there, from his meagre store of drugs, the doctor made up the best prescription his means allowed. 'Five shillings,' he said, as he handed the bottle to Hiram.

'Keep that till I bring the money to you,' said the 'bus conductor, detaching his imitation gold chain from his waistcoat, and drawing forth the showy cheap aluminium or oroid watch. 'I haven't got it with me.' The doctor took it reluctantly and with some grumbling; and Hiram sped away with the medicine. A police officer looked suspiciously at him as he raced along; but, reflecting probably on his own inability to compete with Hiram's lengthy legs, forbore to pursue him. Running all the way, Hiram burst breathless into the street he lived in; and there, lest his hurried footsteps should disturb the patient, subdued his haste and walked on tiptoe. Having given up the medicine, he whispered: 'I shall be in the kitchen if you want me;' and before the girl had time to remonstrate, he was gone. He sat alone in the darkness, thinking, until the house had dropped once more into midnight stillness, and at last fell uncomfortably to sleep, awaking every now and again with great nods, which seemed almost to shake him from his chair. At the usual hour, he lit the fire, guessing the time by the look of the outside air, performed all the small household duties he had taken upon himself, and went out. The morning was raw and foggy, and as the day went on, the fog deepened. His anxieties grew so, that at mid-day, finding a temporary substitute, and promising him payment for his services, he pleaded illness, and went home again, and heard worse news than ever of the patient. Going to his own room, he opened a little drawer, and taking out a small bag, made search within it until he found, in a corner, amongst odds and ends of thread and a score of buttons of various patterns, the half-sovereign which Gerard Lumby had given him, carefully treasured until now.

'I don't like parting with it,' he murmured as he turned it over. 'If I'd ha' spent it in a racket of any sort, I should ha' felt like flyin' in the face o' Providence. But it's a good cause—an' yet I don't like partin' with it.' Suddenly his face brightened; and putting the coin carefully in his pocket, he left the house, and walked the streets, with curious glances at the shop-windows and the signs, blurred with the fog. Coming at last to a pawnbroker's, he entered, pushed aside a swinging-door, and found himself in a wooden box with a counter before him.

'What do you want?' asked the boy behind the counter.

'What will you give me on that?' asked Hiram, producing the half-sovereign and laying it on the counter.

'Why, woddier yer a talkid about?' asked the



boy, who was probably of Hebraic extraction. 'That's half a thick-ud. Get out!' He said this playfully, as if in response to a humorous overture.

But Hiram's face was grave. 'That's a half a sovereign,' he said solemnly; 'worth ten shillin', ain't it? What will you lend on it? I wouldn't part with that coin for five pound. It's all the money I've got, an' I want to realise on it; an' when I can get it back, I shall come for it.'

'Are yer id eardest?' asked the boy.—Hiram nodded with funeral solemnity.—'All right,' said the boy, with his beady Jewish eyes a-glitter. 'Nine shillings.'—Hiram nodded again.—'What's yer dame?'

'Hiram Kysarchichus Search,' responded the client gravely.

'What?' said the boy.—Hiram repeated it.—'Here,' said the boy, pushing the pawn-ticket and the pen across the counter. 'Write it dowl yerself.'

Hiram wrote it in a clerkly hand; and the boy, having demanded and received a halfpenny for the ticket, handed over nine shillings, and the transaction was complete.

'That coin is marked,' said Hiram seriously. 'I shan't take another.'

The boy turned it over, and looking sideways at Hiram out of the corners of his eyes, passed his thumb and finger across each side of it. His trained and cunning touch detected the mark; and fixing a watchmaker's glass to his eye, he read, 'G. L. to H. K. S.'

'All right,' said he, folding it into a little parcel, and tossing it into a drawer, after pinning it to its ticket duplicate.

Hiram then left the shop, and again made his way to the dispensary, where, the doctor being at that time abroad, he left word for him to follow on his return. It was already late in the evening when the doctor again reached the house. He spent but a brief time in the sickroom, and then descending, took Hiram by the sleeve and drew him into the street, where the fog drove in visible billows across the bleared flicker of the lamps.

'It will be all over in a few hours,' he said. 'She asked me, and I told her so. There is somebody she wants to see, and I have sent her daughter to her. Have you got the five shillings?—Thank you. Here's the watch. I shan't charge for this visit, because I've not been able to do anything. I shall come round to make out the certificate in the morning.' It was an everyday matter with him, and practice had taught him an outer hardness.

Hiram went back to the little front room, and sat there until Mary came down. 'My dear,' he said, 'you must get a nurse.' He dreaded what he knew was coming, and could not bear to think of the helpless girl alone at such a time.

'Our next-door neighbour is a nurse,' said the girl. 'I can ask her to come in. But I want to go to Fleet Street. My—my father lives there, and mother says she must see him.'

'You call in the nurse, while I go to Fleet Street,' said Hiram. 'Give me the number.'

She gave him full instructions; and he set out, and remembering the doctor's words, 'It will be all over in a few hours,' he leaped into a cab, forgetful of his scanty store of money, and drove hastily. Then came the interviews already

chronicled, and then the silent watches of the night; and for Hiram in his loneliness, and Mary in her terror-stricken watch, as for Garling in his sleep, with every passing second the warp and woof of Circumstance shot in and out, and not one of the three had any knowledge of the web which Time's swift shuttle was weaving.

## PROCRASTINATION.

THERE is a standard work of English literature which, though deservedly popular with our grandfathers, has been but little read by a later generation. We allude to Young's *Night Thoughts*, a poem of sustained merit, in which the philosophic student cannot fail to find a mine of suggestiveness. If the book be new to him, he will probably smile, and be reminded of the individual, unread in Shakspeare, who, taken to see one of his plays, declared it was all made up of quotations; for such a reader will find in the *Night Thoughts* many a line, many a phrase that has taken deep root in the English language as an expressive familiar quotation. Not every one who talks of 'Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,' knows whence the passage is taken; and perhaps fewer persons still credit Dr Young with the true and pithy saying that 'Procrastination is the thief of Time.' Yet the line is imbedded like a gem in his poem.

How true that saying is, we rarely find appreciated by youthful minds; and yet procrastination—the putting off till to-morrow what ought to be done to-day—is one of the most fatally bad habits the young can acquire. When the thing to be done has been fully considered, and a clear decision arrived at, nothing remains but to fix on the right time for action, and if, as often happens, that right time is the 'now,' the wise man acts promptly, does the deed, whatever it may be, without further parley, and very often is able to throw the whole affair behind him, and so have his energies free for fresh tasks. But the procrastinator talks of 'plenty of time,' of 'by-and-by;' or if pressed, maybe of 'to-morrow'—that to-morrow which is ever a morsel of the veiled future which no human being can have any certainty about, but which is pretty sure to bring with itself its own burden of cares and duties.

It is hardly too strong an assertion to declare that no decided procrastinator was ever really successful in life. Perhaps if he belongs to the limited band of people who are independent of active employment, the habitual procrastinator may seem a comparatively harmless and inoffensive person. His affairs are so small, that we are apt to think that he cannot greatly injure others or himself; but even he sometimes frets his friends by delays and neglect and unpunctuality, which act as clogs on the social wheel; and a life that seems to have no higher purpose than to get over time, can hardly be considered a happy or successful one.

But a vast multitude of persons are so constituted, that the habit of procrastination early acquired and long continued, or its opposite, that of prompt action, will make all the difference between partial failure and real success in life. Observe, how 'unlucky' the dilatory person is often considered, or at anyrate considers himself;

while the truth is the ill luck can five times out of six be clearly traced to his own neglect of opportunities and to his needless delays. He had a certain letter of introduction a week in his pocket, but finds on delivering it that the advantageous post he was seeking has been two days filled up. He knows that a friend whom he promised to visit for the leave-taking is about to go abroad for years; but he puts off the little necessary excursion so long, that when at last he makes his call, he is told 'Mr So-and-so sailed yesterday; he was expecting you all the week, and seemed sorry not to see you.'

Worse still is it when the too long delayed visit is to some sick friend or relative who has pined to behold once more the long absent one. With the old or the seriously ill, it is a sad thing to wait expectantly for a beloved face and not to see it; and very terrible is the recollection of the one summoned, when his conscience tells him he has trifled with time, as he finds that he arrives at last just too late. He can find small comfort in the excuses he makes to himself: 'I never thought the illness was so serious;' 'I never thought that the end was so near.'

It is impossible to read history and biography without being struck by the momentous issues which have been decided by prompt action or needless delay. It is said that the unfortunate Louis XVI. and his Queen would in all probability have escaped from France had not Marie Antoinette waited for some jewels to be packed, and so delayed the starting for that little journey which resulted in their arrest at Varenne. Who can tell how different the history of Europe might have been, had that jewel-packing been left alone!

Corporate bodies—nations even—are as apt to procrastinate as individuals, putting off the execution of measures, the expediency of which has been fully acknowledged, from time to time, till the recipients of 'favours to come' are often 'heart-sick' from 'hope deferred.' 'He who gives promptly gives double,' says the old Latin proverb (*Bis dat, qui cito dat*), and it certainly applies to all cases in which benefits are to be conferred. The Yankee advice to be quite sure you are right, and then 'go ahead,' is not to be despised.

The truth is, that little unfulfilled duties are like so many stones in our path, hindering and obstructing our progress, and not seldom tripping us up. How often do we find a plan frustrated because some preliminary step, necessary to its execution, has been needlessly delayed. On the other hand, a seemingly small duty promptly fulfilled is often like an acorn that is planted in suitable soil. We think little more about it, till one day there is a sapling before us, which will grow into a sheltering tree by-and-by. Probably duties fulfilled at the right time have always a germinating power that is at work for our benefit, and of which we shall see the results sooner or later.

We believe it was Madame de Staël who said that 'No more' was the most mournful phrase in the English language; but we think that the words 'Too late' are sadder still. To be too late—when it might have been otherwise—with the kind word or kind action which would have comforted the suffering; too late with the word of forgiveness that ought to have been spoken long ago; too late in acquiring useful knowledge that

lay within our grasp; too late in gaining wisdom that would have saved us from a multitude of errors; what sorrow and remorse may be behind the words!

We wonder if Lord Chesterfield felt the sting of Dr Johnson's famous letter to him. The great lexicographer had accomplished his task, though long years of penury and privation would have daunted a weaker spirit. Lord Chesterfield was called his patron; and when the Dictionary was completed and its author well known, that nobleman appeared proud of the title. It was then that Johnson wrote: 'Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it.'

But though 'Too late' has a mournful sound, like the plaintiveness of a minor chord, there is surely an inspiring trumpet-note of cheerfulness in the proverb, 'It is never too late to mend.' It is worse than folly to let the mind fossilise in its old opinions, if these be erroneous; though there are people who do not see that changing an opinion is often only tantamount to saying, 'I am wiser to-day than I was yesterday.' Yes; to mend what is evil as far as we can, is the one thing certainly which it is never 'too late' to do. 'For want of a nail, the shoe was cast; for want of the shoe, the horse went lame; and so the race was lost.'

'A stitch in time saves nine,' is another homely proverb, and one that, by dint of its assonant rhyme, clings to the memory. Never should it be forgotten by those who are given to procrastination. Let them couple it with 'Never too late to mend,' and taking both sayings to heart, begin a new system. They will probably be surprised at the happy results.

## SETTING THE SNARES.

### CHAPTER III.

IN common with all fairly educated lads, Arthur had heard and read much of the United States; the wonderful progress of the country, its vast extent of territory, its ever-swelling population, and its great cities. Yet with all this, his excited imagination was disappointed at seeing nothing to remind him of the 'Last of the Mohicans'; and when, after a thousand miles or so of travel, he stopped at St Louis for a night, he was fairly astounded to find such an enormous city so far from the coast, just as busy and orderly as an English city. He had secretly watched from the windows of the car, in expectation of seeing at least a few rattlesnakes; but not a single one was visible, though during the journey through the prairie country a few buffaloes were descried; while as for the travellers by the cars, there was not a trace of any one of Cooper's heroes among them all.

At last they reached Kansas, to an agent in which city Arthur had sent a telegram from New York; and this agent was now in waiting for him at the station. The agent had been authorised

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by Mr Holt to furnish Arthur with whatever was necessary for his equipment, and to give him any information and assistance in getting forward to the ranche. It was necessary therefore that Arthur should stay for at least a day in Kansas City, in order to complete these arrangements. He had still, the agent told him, about four or five hundred miles to travel by rail, and on arriving at a certain small station on the road, a wagon would meet him from Mr Holt's ranche, and convey him to his destination.

On the day following Arthur's arrival in Kansas City, he was busily engaged with the agent in procuring various commodities and articles of personal equipment, agreeable to Mr Holt's instructions; and among the latter was an article—namely, a six-shooter revolver—the necessity for which, as impressed upon him by the agent, gave Arthur a somewhat alarming idea of the nature of the country he was now to enter upon. Along with the revolver, however, he got, what fully restored his equanimity, namely, a rifle, in the handling of which he had pleasant anticipations of the sport he was likely to enjoy on his uncle's ranche. Towards afternoon, the agent and he had completed their work, and Arthur returned to his hotel to dine. Thereafter, he went out to see the city and its surroundings, and for a time was delighted and interested by all the novelty of the place and the people; but by-and-by the ennui which is almost the inevitable companion of a solitary traveller in a strange town, seized upon him, and he felt dull and weary enough as he sauntered aimlessly through the streets after nightfall.

It was during this aimless saunter that he made what he felt to be a ridiculous mistake, due, doubtless, to his preoccupied mind. He was passing an hotel or restaurant, and happening to look into the entrance as he passed, he met the gaze of a man who was standing behind the glass doors. In an instant Arthur's lethargy was gone; he hesitated for a few seconds and then pushed the doors apart, and stepped into the hall. There was no one there. Half-a-dozen doors, opening upon various parts of the interior, would of course have afforded retreat to any one who chose to evade him; but his entrance had followed so quickly upon his seeing the man, that unless the latter had instantaneously taken the alarm, he could not have vanished. Yet he *had* vanished; and why he should do so—why he should seek to avoid Arthur at all—what it all meant, was inexplicable.

As Arthur looked around him with a puzzled air, a coloured waiter came out from one of the further rooms, and seeing a stranger, civilly asked him what he wanted. The young man felt at a loss to explain why he was there, but managed to tell the negro that he thought he had seen a gentleman whom he knew, standing in the hall. The waiter threw open a door, and said: 'Des is de saloon, sah; gentlemen come out of hyar and go in hyar. Is de gentleman in dere, sah?'

Arthur looked round; but there was no one in the spacious saloon resembling the person he sought; so, with a few words of excuse, he left the place, feeling remarkably ashamed of himself for making such a mistake.

'I was thinking,' he said to himself, 'of the

events of the few days I passed in New York; but I did not think I was so utterly absorbed as to fall into such a blunder. Still, I *must* have seen him! I could have sworn I saw the face of Mr Bellar on the other side of that glass. I could have sworn to his eyes—to every feature! Yet he cannot be within a thousand miles of this spot.'

He was quite unable to solve the problem, although he thought of little else during the evening; the only tangible and sensible result he could arrive at being the too evident conclusion that he had made an excessively stupid mistake.

In the course of the next afternoon, having concluded all business with the agent, he started on the last stage of his journey by rail, arriving at an early hour next morning at Big Turkey Springs, the place at which the wagon from Holt's Ranche was to meet him. This place had been spoken of to Arthur, at Kansas, as 'Big Turkey Springs City;' but, excepting the station offices and a few huts close by, possibly for the use of the railway servants, he could not see a single house. He asked a man, apparently the solitary porter of the place, who was gazing after the departing train, while he changed the exhausted plug of tobacco he had been chewing, for a fresh one, where the city was.

The man turned slowly round, looked at Arthur as he stood by the side of his packages, and after a moment's deliberation, replied: 'I reckon you air a stranger out West—a Britisher, too. Is that so?' Arthur replied that he was a Britisher as reckoned; and the man smiled grimly as he continued: 'I thought so; and being a young Britisher, you don't know a Western city when you see it. This is *goin'* to be a city, stranger.—Air you bound for Squire Holt's?'

'Yes,' replied Arthur.

'I guessed as much,' resumed the man. 'You air waited for. There's a man with a team around here somewhere; he has been waiting—Oh, here he is.' With this he gave a curious shout, which was answered from a little distance; and Arthur saw a man emerge from among some trees. 'That's the gentleman from Holt's Ranche,' said the porter, moving off with the air of a man who had exhausted his interest in the matter; and Arthur was left to introduce himself. When this was done, the 'gentleman' from the ranche said: 'I guess these are your fixings?'—pointing to Arthur's luggage. 'We will call a couple of the boys to help.'

Following the man, Arthur found himself in a rude path, which led to three or four low cottages—'shanties,' they were called—where stood a wagon, shaped like a long and very narrow box. He judged rightly that this was his conveyance.

His conductor gave a shout; and the 'boys'—who were both middle-aged men—came out from a stable in answer, and in compliance with the instructions of the first man, brought round Arthur's 'fixings.' Then the mules were put to the wagon, the driver and Arthur mounted, and with no more words, they drove away.

'How far is it to Mr Holt's?' asked Arthur.

'About thirteen, or mebbe fourteen mile,' was the reply.



'Is it near the city—Andrew Jackson City?'

'Wal—yes, it is,' returned the man, after a shrewd glance at his questioner.

'Is the city a large place?' pursued Arthur, with his eye upon Big Turkey Springs City, as he spoke.

'The place is large enough; yes, it's a large place,' said the man.

There was something so ambiguous in this answer, that after a pause, our young traveller asked if there were many people in the city.

'Wal, no; there ain't,' replied the man. 'But you will see for yourself, bimeby.'

After a journey of some two hours, or rather more, they passed a low but somewhat extensive building, evidently a farmhouse from the surrounding tokens, but differing a good deal from the farmhouses of Surrey.

'That is Squire Gaisford's,' explained the driver; 'our nearest neighbour. Them 'doby shanties is where his Mexicans live.' He pointed with his whip to three or four huts, built, it appeared to Arthur, of some dark earth, but in reality of huge blocks of clay, dried in the sun, and termed *adobes*, but shortened into 'doby' in ordinary Western parlance. A woman with some children came to the door of one of these huts to watch the passing wagon; her dark hair and swarthy features, with the equally swarthy children, told her Mexican blood. These were the only persons seen on their journey.

Soon after, the road crossed a narrow stream, climbed a short slope; and Arthur, on arriving at the crest of this eminence, saw another low but large house, built partly of logs and partly of *adobes*; with several large inclosures and sheds near, and four or five 'shanties' hard by. There were several Mexicans moving about the inclosures, in which were a number of cattle; and altogether, especially after such a lonely ride, the place had a cheerful look.

'This is Holt's Rancho,' said the driver. 'And here is the Squire himself.'

As he spoke, a tall man turned a clump of trees and came towards them—an elderly, weather-browned, but sinewy and powerful man; dressed in garments which, but for the broad slouched hat, would have given him much the air of an English farmer. Yet no farmer at home ever carried a gun in the manner which the Squire bore his rifle, nor did farmers at home carry large revolvers on their hips in leathern sheaths.

Our young friend sprang from the wagon, and approaching the new-comer, introduced himself as Arthur Richmond.

The Squire, as he was often called, took the boy's hand in his own grip, and looked for a moment searchingly and closely into his face. 'Well,' he said at last, as though satisfied with his scrutiny, 'there's a look in your eyes like my wife that's dead; and if you are as good as she was, or don't belie your own face, I will ask no more.—This is Holt's Rancho. You are welcome, and I hope you will find it a happy home.'

#### CHAPTER IV.

Thus agreeably received, Arthur felt at once at home; and before long, life at Holt's Rancho began to prove very enjoyable to him. He had

his choice of half-a-dozen horses, and was shortly initiated by Texas Dick—the man who had driven him from the station—in all the mysteries of horse-breaking, as that art is practised there on the spirited creatures that run wild, though not ownerless, upon the prairies. Dick had taken quite a liking to Arthur, whom he evidently regarded as having been introduced to the ranche under his auspices; hence he was willing to impart any knowledge in his power to the young man. Much of his time was also at first spent in riding over the ranche with Mr Holt, receiving some explanation as to the character of the soil, learning the brands on their cattle; seeing where the range of feeding-ground was; and making acquaintance with the various 'helps' on the ranche, who were chiefly Mexicans, there being only two 'white' helps besides Texas Dick. Of these latter, one was an Englishman, the other a New Englander.

Arthur was soon on capital terms with all the men, although Texas Dick remained his especial 'chum.' He also found, to his surprise, that he was apparently popular likewise with the Mexicans, not only on his own ranche, but on Farmer Gaisford's, and, in fact, for several miles round. At first, he thought it was merely the usual manner of these people, and spoke to Texas Dick on the subject, although with some timidity, expecting that grim frontiersman to ridicule his vanity. Texas Dick, however, did no such thing. He listened to Arthur's account attentively enough, then with a grave nod of assent, said: 'You air right there, sir-ree; yes. Them Greasers'—thus he and most of his comrades spoke of the Mexicans—'they like you; and you will get on with them considerable smart. You air the first of the white men here that has treated them well, and has spoke civil, and the ignorant cusses like it.'

'I suppose they do,' said Arthur. 'But why is not everybody civil to them?—and why does not everybody treat them well? Why do not you treat them civilly, Dick? I see that you don't always do it, at anyrate.'

'Wal,' began the Texan reflectively, and without the slightest touch of irritation in his voice—'wal, I reckon it ain't the natur of most whites to con-sort with the Greasers, nohow; and that's where it is.'

Further elucidation or justification of this dislike Arthur could never obtain, either from Texas Dick or from any other white man to whom he spoke—the Mexicans, after all, having just as much claim to be reckoned 'white' as themselves.

The favourite ride—nobody walked a mile at a stretch in those parts, if he could possibly avoid it—was to the ranche of their next neighbour, Squire Gaisford. (Andrew Jackson City, by-the-by, was the group of half-a-score cabins, with a store and a post-office, and was some two miles from either ranche.) Squire Gaisford had rather a large family, the eldest being a daughter, Miss Rachel, a girl of eighteen or nineteen; and although at first shy and silent in the presence of a young gentleman from the Old Country, she soon got over this drawback, and proved to be as frank, cheerful, and good-tempered, as she was pretty. She was a capital rider too, and when mounted on her favourite pony—called from the



bright colour of its mane, Goldthread—she would lead the way over such places as quite appalled Arthur, more than once fairly daunting him, so that he would not and did not follow—to the openly expressed mirth of the young lady.

It was at the Gaisford Rancho, indeed, that Arthur saw his friend Texas Dick first exercise his skill in horse-breaking. He had ridden over in the morning with Mr Holt and Texas Dick, in company with another horse-breaker—a Mexican called Manuel, and had received a most cordial greeting from the farmer. In the course of a general conversation, in which Arthur spoke to Rachel about the horses, he took occasion to compliment her on the beauty and spirit of her favourite pony Goldthread.

'Ah! Mr Richmond,' she said, 'you should have seen my beautiful Lily, my white pony! She was the prettiest pony in the territory. Father was offered a thousand dollars for her. But Mr Tony rode her so carelessly over some rocks, that she broke her leg, and had to be shot.'

'What a misfortune!' said Arthur.—'But who is Mr Tony?'

'Mr Tony!' echoed the girl. 'Who is Mr Tony! Is it possible that you do not know who Mr Tony is?'

'I do not indeed,' said Arthur, who was considerably astonished at the emotional way in which Miss Rachel spoke. 'I never heard of him. Who is he—or who was he?'

'He was resident with Mr Holt until shortly before you came,' replied the girl. 'But no one knows where he is now, or even if he is alive.'

'Why did he leave?' inquired Arthur, who now recollected that in the letter he had first received from the farmer, the latter spoke of a relative having left him, so that he was alone.

'I—I don't know,' replied Rachel. 'No one seems to know. I do not think—he and Mr Holt parted very good friends. But I wish I had not spoken about him.'

Her father, who, with Mr Holt, had been standing conversing at some distance, now approached them, and thus put an end for the time to their conversation on the subject of Mr Tony.

A herd of horses had just been driven from the prairie into the spacious inclosure of the corral, for the purpose of having selected from them as many as were required of those which bore the Gaisford brand. Arthur was entering the gates of the corral, the farmer having momentarily stopped to give some directions to a 'help,' when the young man started and recoiled at finding himself face to face with an Indian, the first he had yet seen, the tribes having left the district for a while to hunt the buffalo.

'Ugh! Como le va! how do?' said the savage, in a deep guttural voice, but holding out his hand with a friendly smile as he spoke.

Arthur took the proffered hand, and returned the greeting, smiling in his turn. The Indian was a man a trifle above middle height, rather broader and thicker built than was the rule; with coarse black hair, hanging in straight threads; his dress being a buckskin jacket, buckskin shirt, and buckskin leggings fringed

with the same material, and ornamented with beads. He was armed with rifle, bow, and quiver, while a long straight knife hung in a sheath by his side.

'Ha! Good-morning, Cuervo,' said Mr Holt, who now came up.—'This is a good Indian, Arthur, and one of the Uté captains.'

The Indian replied in broken English and Spanish, pointing to his gun, and displaying an empty pouch. Holt shook his head. The Indian looked very dejected.

'He says he has no caps for his gun, and they are quite out at the store; so he cannot go after some antelope he has seen on the foot-hills.'

'I can let him have some,' said Arthur. 'I brought a large packet with me from Kansas, and he can have as many as you wish. I have some of them in my pocket.'

'Give him fifty, if you can spare them, by all means, for he is a good Indian,' said Holt, who turned to the Uté, and evidently informed him of his good fortune; for the latter again seized Arthur's hand and shook it heartily, exclaiming at least a dozen times over, 'Bueno! bueno!' [Good, good!]

After the work of the day was finished, and Mr Holt, Arthur, and Texas Dick were riding home together Dick suddenly exclaimed: 'Say! Didn't I see you talking with old Cuervo, the Uté, to-day?' This abrupt question was to his master, who replied in the affirmative.

'Wal,' continued Dick; 'I don't feel no kind of surprise at that, as I hear tell the Utés was camping out yonder. But the Apachés have come back too.'

'No; you are wrong there, Dick,' returned his master. 'They are out on the plains some two hundred miles north. I met a man who came on by the mail yesterday, and had seen them there.'

'Wal, I see two of 'em crossing Rabbit Tail Creek yesterday, when I was looking after that steer,' pursued Dick.

'Oh, they must have been Utés,' said his master. 'You were not very close to them, I estimate.'

'Utés!' exclaimed Dick with some indignation; 'you may as well tell me they was burros' [Mexican for asses]. 'Why, one of them was that Pedro, the drunkenest, meanest cuss in the tribe; the other was Pequito Miguel. It was Pedro who stole my pony last fall, you bet your sweet life.'

'But his tribe are out on the great prairies, I tell you,' returned Mr Holt.

'Wal, I don't care,' persisted Dick; 'I know Pedro when I see him, and I know the other Injun too. They was Apachés, or I don't know nothing. But what puzzled me, boss, was that there was a white man along, and I thought I knew him too.'

'Who was he?' asked the farmer, as the other paused.

'Wal, I don't know,' replied Dick, knitting his brows thoughtfully; 'they was a smart piece away, and I could not see his face. They saw me first, unluckily, and made tracks till they got among the hills and lost me. But I knew the white man's walk, his figger, the very turn of his head, as well as I do yourn. Yet, I can't for my life tell where I have seen him.'

'It is strange that you should have seen these men yesterday,' said the farmer, after a pause, 'for as we rode through Crowsfoot Cañon, I felt sure that I heard an Indian's whoop. There was no doubt of it, in fact, but I fancied at the time it was an Apaché yell. I thought afterwards that I must have been mistaken; but from what you now tell me, I may have been right.'

'Bad Injuns loafing around with whites, don't mean no good,' said the Texan significantly.

### MORTIMER COLLINS.

In the press of competitors for literary distinction, it is only, as a rule, the very expert and the very strong that are able to render themselves conspicuous in the public eye. Yet, while in this as in other departments of human effort, the saying holds good that the weakest go to the wall, it is still possible that a few competitors of real merit may by the force of circumstances be jostled out of the current of notoriety, and only be known to the few who have had occasion to mark their skill and dexterity. Mortimer Collins probably belongs to the latter class. Genial and easy in life, he took little thought for fame's to-morrow. He lived happily, light-heartedly, almost boyishly, for the day, not over much concerned as to the opinion outsiders might form of him; glad if only he might make happy those immediately around him; and throwing off, with the easy strength of an expert, the work called for by the exigencies of the hour.

But although he has written some things which deserve to live in the coming years, it is possible that he might have produced work still more worthy had he not been compelled to make a living by literature, and to write at the high-pressure speed demanded of all feeders of modern journalism. He laboured under disadvantages from the very first; for his father dying early, his mother was left with very slender means for her son's education. But that he made the best use of such instructions was given to him, may be gathered from the fact that when he was in his teens his mother asked Dr Craik to read Virgil with him; and the worthy doctor soon declared it was quite useless, as the boy knew Virgil better than himself. When he left school, he became tutor in a gentleman's family in the north of England.

But tutorial work did not satisfy his ambition. He had while at school, and unknown to his mother, contributed to several papers. *Punch* had accepted some verses from him; and in *Fraser's Magazine* there was a very sprightly legend from his pen, in the manner of Ingoldsby; the poet's corner in various provincial papers was filled by him; and he was a regular contributor to a newspaper published in Bath, the editor being unaware at the time that these contributions, which he thoroughly appreciated, came from a mere lad. Fired with success, he longed to go to London and try his fortune in the world of letters.

Consequently, he gave up his tutorship and repaired to the Metropolis; but after a few months his mother persuaded him to go back to teaching, as a safer means of livelihood. When about three-and-twenty, he was installed as Mathematical Master at Queen Elizabeth's College in Guernsey. Here he remained five years; but he did not lose his taste for literary occupation. He started a little journal called the *Guernsey Star*, and he still continued to contribute to various English papers. Before leaving Guernsey, he published his first work, a collection of poems entitled *Idyls and Rhymes*. In 1856 he left Guernsey, and started seriously as a journalist, to which profession, at first, he devoted himself almost exclusively.

His second work, being another collection of poems, called *Summer Songs*, was published in 1860. His first novel appeared in 1864 in the *Dublin University Magazine*; the second following three years after. In 1868 came a decided change in his career. He had been known for some years amongst men of letters in London as a thorough Bohemian; and had even been dubbed the King of Bohemia. At length, casting off the attractions of London life, Collins took unto himself a better-half, and retired to the cottage at Knowl Hill, in Berkshire, which has become associated with his name. Here he lived an almost idyllic life for eight years; and it was during this time that his best works were produced. Besides fifteen novels, he published another volume of poems called *The Inn of Strange Meetings*; also *The British Birds*, a modernisation of the old Greek comedy of Aristophanes; and *The Secret of Long Life*; while, since his death, two collections of essays and other prose writings, under the titles of *Pen Sketches by a Vanished Hand*, and *Thoughts in My Garden*, have appeared. His widow has likewise issued an excellent Memoir of her husband's life, with his letters; also an admirable collection of his brightest thoughts and wisest sayings, entitled *Attic Salt, or Epigrammatic Sayings, Healthful, Humorous, and Wise*.

By his novels it is not easy to judge him; but the collections which have appeared since his death have perhaps done more to enlarge and solidify his reputation than all before. His intellect seemed to brighten towards the close of his life; and his latest poems, written shortly before his death in 1876, are better than any of those previously collected. His poems have been deservedly admired for their *esprit*, wit, sparkling satire, and what, for want of a better word, we may call airiness. Here is one of his quaint conceits:

O touch that rosebud! it will bloom,  
My lady fair!  
A passionate red in dim green gloom,  
A joy, a splendour, a perfume  
That sleeps in air.

You touched my heart; it gave a thrill  
Just like a rose,  
That opens at a lady's will;  
Its bloom is always yours until  
You bid it close.

His love of nature included that of quadrupeds and birds, the latter to such an extent that the 'feathered songsters' of Knowl Hill, taught by their instinct whom to trust, would perch on his shoulder while he was writing on the lawn, follow him about the garden, and allow him to stroke them while sitting on the nest. One of his most admired poems is an address to a Thrush, which made its home in the row of limes round his garden:

All through the sultry hours of June,  
From morning blithe to golden noon,  
And till the star of evening climbs  
The gray-blue East, a world too soon,  
There sings a Thrush amid the limes.

God's poet, hid in foliage green,  
Sings endless songs, himself unseen;  
Right seldom come his silent times.  
Linger, ye summer hours serene!  
Sing on, dear Thrush, amid the limes!

\* \* \* \* \*

May I not dream God sends thee there,  
Thou mellow angel of the air,  
Even to rebuke my earthlier rhymes  
With music's soul, all praise and prayer?  
Is that thy lesson in the limes?

Closer to God art thou than I:  
His minstrel thou, whose brown wings fly  
Through silent æther's summer climes.  
Ah, never may thy music die!  
Sing on, dear Thrush, amid the limes!

Mortimer Collins's philosophy and religion were thoroughly unconventional, but very real; and were so much a part of the man himself, and not merely a one-day habit, that signs of both occur frequently in all his writings, whether prose or poetry, in novel or newspaper. We cannot help seeing the large-heartedness of the man, and his charitable feelings towards his fellow-creatures. As the writer of the preface to *Attie Salt* remarks: 'For the young and old alike, for the rich man and the poor, for boy and for girl, for business man and for poet, he has written words of counsel which are worth their weight in gold; and for a young man or for a girl just entering life, I can imagine few authors from whose works they could gather advice so precious—advice which would make them more manly and more womanly, or have upon them a more lasting influence for good.'

And yet, with all his seriousness, he was possessed of a bright, subtle humour, which occasionally took the form of that persiflage which is so conspicuous in some of Byron's writings. He has great freedom of style; occasionally, however, showing the errors of haste and worry—as in a man who was overworked. And this might be the case, for he was one of the hardest workers in the literary world of his time. There seems to be no doubt that his death occurred from overstrain of the mental powers and from want of rest; for he had taken no holiday for some years.

In the month of July 1876, Mortimer Collins died of rupture of the heart. Lamented by his widow, and by a large number of friends, his loss seemed personal even to many who knew him only by his books; for we see in them the

man himself—lovable and large-hearted, gentle as a child. As he himself expresses it, he passed into

The new life of the new world, unshorn  
Of the swift brain, the executing hand;

for he continued his labours until within three days of his death.

## THE ADVENTURES OF AN AMERICAN 'SPECIAL.'

BY ONE OF THEM.

SECOND PAPER.

WE all knew Boggs. He was captain of a Target Excursion and Clam Chowder Association, composed of the greatest blackguards of the Sixth Ward, known by many to be one of the worst districts of New York. His nod could influence five or six hundred votes, and cause the ballot-box to be stuffed with as many more. It will therefore hardly be a matter of surprise if, under these circumstances, Boggs set all justice at defiance, and cherished within his bosom such a free scorn of law and order, as could only be entertained by a New York ruffian under the golden rule of the Tammany Ring, of which our acquaintance was a staunch supporter.

Boggs was 'capper' for a dishonest gambling saloon in Ann Street, and probably part proprietor. He did a flourishing business in several mock-auction shops known to the police as Peter Funk Dens. His advertisements, headed by a flaming woodcut representing bags of gold pouring forth untold riches, might be found in most of the 'respectable' weeklies; and in short, though he had as many changes as Proteus, we knew of a surety that no matter what new swindle might be started, from a Wall Street gudgeon broker to a Third Avenue lottery-shop, it was simply a change rung upon the genius of Boggs. Not Jonathan Wild in his palmy days was surrounded by a more devoted band than our acquaintance. His blacklegs and political loafers were thoroughly trained; and the various members of the 'Sawdust Gang' were at any moment ready to sacrifice themselves, so that their leader might escape the penalties due to his free style of making a living. He had been arrested so many times and discharged as often, that at last the police gave up all hope of ever proving anything against him. He was a stout, good-humoured-looking man of forty, with coal-black eyes set close together, close-cropped black hair, a small retreating forehead, short cropped moustache, and a rather sallow complexion. A gorgeous watch-chain reposed on his white vest; and above it flashed a cluster of diamonds in the centre of a snowy shirt-front, which many a humble thief in his own fierce ward longed to clutch. But that cluster was as secure as if in the bank; for at the back of Boggs's 'spring-bottom lavender pants,'



there reposed a Colt's four-shooter, which its owner was apt to produce on short notice and use freely. Boggs was a good-humoured free-handed rascal, full of quaint stories and short cynical sentences; but if he conceived himself offended, fearful was the language he used, and most woful his vengeance. Having thus endeavoured to give a description of Boggs, we will take our leave of him for the present, promising that we shall encounter him again.

Going to the assignment book of the journal on which the writer was engaged in the summer of '75, he found the following: 'Mr Blank will work up gang of counterfeiters; particulars in his desk.'

The 'particulars' consisted of a letter from one of the Chicago readers of the journal, stating that he had received the following circular from New York.

*Private and confidential.*

DEAR SIR—We have made extensive inquiries about you in your city, and find that you are a good business man, and one to be trusted thoroughly to do a great trade with.

We have on hand a number of fac-simile United States' notes ranging from five to one hundred dollars, of which inclosed is a specimen. We will send them to you cash on delivery at the following rates: good 25 dollars = 100 dollars queer; 50 dollars = 250 dollars queer; 75 dollars = 550 dollars queer; 100 dollars = 1000 dollars queer.—Hoping to be favoured with a large order, for it is a sure fortune, we remain your obedient servants,

PAUL AND PAUL.

P.S.—If you send us a big order, we will deal with no one else in your town.

Our correspondent informed us that he had passed the five-dollar specimen with ease, the teller of the first National Bank having assured him that it was a good one.

The circular bore no address, so that it was evident some one in the post-office had been 'squared'—that is, bribed—a not uncommon occurrence.

Obviously, the first thing to be done was to purchase some of the 'queer' from Messrs Paul and Paul, not only for the purpose of proving the uttering, but also to establish a confidence which might enable one to get at them directly.

The writer wired to his correspondent, telling him to write to Messrs Paul and Paul, inclosing them twenty-five dollars, and stating that he would arrive in town on a certain date to make further large purchases if he found them go well. Meanwhile, Captain Allair of the Second precinct was interviewed, and preparations made to effect a capture.

In less than a week, a letter arrived, per Adams' express, from Chicago inclosing a tin case filled with fac-similes of United States' notes to the amount of one hundred dollars. The writer had of course, long before this, come to

the conclusion that Boggs, and no other, was the party at the bottom of the swindle.

And a most ingenious one it was; for the party so swindled could get no redress except by acknowledging himself a knave. Paul and Paul knew very well that their victim would take right good care to keep his own counsel. To use a nautical term, we were all 'taken aback,' and had been neatly done out of twenty-five dollars.

It was no use working it up through the post-office. At the first intimation of danger from that quarter, the rogues would decamp long before we could prove anything against them. Besides, as the writer stated in his last paper, it is a point of honour amongst New York journalists not to be beaten.

Rogues are proverbially careless; and it was just that forlorn hope which started the writer off to Philadelphia, whence he wrote to Messrs Paul and Paul, saying that he had received their circular, and passed the five-dollar note easily, adding that he was afraid to trust the Adams' Express Company, owing to his being so well known amongst the community. But he would come to New York and buy a thousand dollars-worth of the 'queer' if it was as good as specimen.

The letter purported to come from the paying teller of the tenth National Bank. The bait was a large one, and the rogues, forgetting their usual caution, fell into the trap. Ere long, a letter arrived, telling the writer to come on to New York on Wednesday following, by the nine o'clock train; to put up at the *New York Hotel*, corner of Fulton and Pearl Streets, where a man would call on him. He was on no account to speak to anybody. If he did, he would see no one, as he would be 'shadowed' all the way from Philadelphia.

Captain Allair promptly engaged a room; and on the appointed day, half-a-dozen plain-clothes policemen were scattered about the hotel.

The writer arrived from Philadelphia in the rôle of a dashing young bank clerk, wrote his name down in the hotel book, was given his key, and went up to his room, to find Sergeant Omahony under the bed.

Half an hour afterwards, a knock announced the agent of Paul and Paul. He found 'the gentleman from Philadelphia,' apparently in the greatest agonies of a sudden attack of cholera and remorse, and was despatched for some brandy.

'No,' said the writer on his return; 'this is a judgment on me for this wicked thing I was about to do. I'll go back; I won't have anything to do with it.'

'Brace up and be a man,' said Paul and Paul's agent. 'Have you the money?'

'Yes,' responded the writer; 'I took it out of the bank-vault before I left, intending to replace it with "queer" to-morrow morning. But I won't do it now. I am afraid this is a judgment.'

'How much have you got?'

'Fifteen hundred dollars.'

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The man's eyes fairly glistened with greed, as the writer, by a great effort, got up and unlocked a hand-bag, showing a pile of United States' greenbacks, which were furnished by the police for the purpose.

'Don't you touch them!' added the writer sternly. 'I won't part unless I see the "queer." Have you got it with you?'

'No,' said the agent; 'you must come to our place of business.'

'What's the address? I'll come and see you in the afternoon, if I'm better.'

'I dursn't tell you the address,' said the agent cautiously. 'But come with me. It's only a few minutes' walk from here, and you needn't buy unless you've a mind to.'

Thus adjured, the writer put on his coat and vest, and was going without the bag; but the agent begged him to bring it, as he was almost sure to buy some 'queer.'

A drink was obtained at the bar, for the double purpose of allowing Sergeant Omahony to get out of the room, and the plain-clothes men to form a link-line right and left; these rogues being so suspicious, that if the same man follows them for a hundred yards, they fear 'a shadow.'

For a good twenty minutes the agent kept his supposed victim twisting and turning up and down various streets, within five minutes' walk of the hotel all the time, and at last turning down a dirty little street, announced that they had arrived. After traversing a narrow passage-way, and ascending a dirty flight of stairs, a door was opened to a signal; and behold the writer in the presence of Boggs, surrounded by some of his Sawdust Gang!

'Here's the gentleman that wants to buy the "queer,"' said the agent.

But Boggs jumped up with a mighty oath, and clapped his hands behind him.

'It's no use, lads,' exclaimed the writer. 'Hands up! You can't escape. The place is surrounded.'

At the same moment, Sergeant Omahony and the others bounced into the room, and in a twinkling we had the handcuffs on.

'I'm a commission merchant, and I want to sell coals,' yelled Boggs; and then his wrath fell upon the agent. 'You didn't know that fellow, you fool!' yelled Boggs. 'Don't you know he's a special?' And then turning rapidly on the writer: 'I'll be at you for this, if I get a life-stretch for it.'

We searched the place, and found quantities of tin cases ready for packing, and letters showing the swindle to have been in full blast.

At the station, Boggs was searched, and over seven hundred dollars found on him. But he had recovered his ready knavishness by this time, and coolly informed Captain Allair that the writer had 'rounded on him' because he had refused to 'square him.'

Boggs was committed for trial before the United States' Court on a charge of attempting to utter counterfeit money; but Colonel Spencer, his counsel, got him off with flying colours; whereupon he coolly turned round in court and vowed a solemn oath to put out the writer's eyes at the first opportunity. The police, he said, he had no animus against. They merely did their duty

when it came in their way. But the prying specials that were always poking their nose in places where they had no business, and ferreting out things that would otherwise be left alone, would be taught a lesson that they would not soon forget.

These were taken as the mere vapourings of one who had had a lucrative swindle spoiled; but knowing the character of the man and the reputation of his gang, the writer was particularly careful where he went for some time afterwards.

About six months after the above described events, the writer was challenged by a friend to a game of billiards, and unthinkingly entered a billiard saloon near Ann Street, which was the down-town headquarters of the gang. He turned round the venetian screen which faced the door, to find himself in the presence of Boggs and some five more of the most desperate of his ruffians. Almost instantly, one of the party made a movement to get between him and the door. To make a sudden dash for liberty was to invite a conflict, and probably be either shot or beaten senseless ere assistance could arrive. A second's reflection convinced the writer that there was only one course to pursue. Walking boldly up to the cue-rack into the centre of the room away from the door, he turned to Boggs, and said: 'I understand, Mr Boggs, that you have announced your intention of putting out my eyes, and I have come to give you an opportunity of doing so. Will you commence now?'

Boggs was silent, evidently thinking matters out.

The writer pursued his advantage. 'I am going to play a game of fifty up, Mr Boggs,' he said; 'during that time, you can make up your mind.'

Selecting a cue, the writer placed a silver whistle, such as are used to call cars, carelessly in his mouth, and began the game. The mental torture endured in those fifteen minutes was something dreadful. Every moment the writer expected a sudden rush, a knife-thrust, or a bullet. But nothing occurred save muttered whisperings, and once or twice the word 'plant' became audible. When the game was over, the writer put away his cue, and walked with a slowness that forced him to perspire from inward perturbation towards the receiving clerk, and deposited the price of the game. Then he turned towards the gang. 'I am glad for your own sake, Mr Boggs,' he said, 'that you didn't make any attempt on my eyes. Take my advice; it will never be wise to do it.'

'You don't think I'm such a flat as to run my head into a police plant,' said Boggs in awful language; 'but I'll get you dead to rights yet.'

The writer then withdrew; but so great was the reaction from the strong tension of the nervous system suddenly relaxed by safety, that he was seized by an excessive fit of trembling, which lasted nearly three hours.

This was the last time the writer ran across Boggs. He was killed some time after in a bar-room fight on election-day in the Sixth Ward; and his gang, bereft of the presiding genius, soon afterwards broke up. He was a fair sample of the

superior class of the New York *chevalier d'industrie*; more refined and gentleman-like than his brother of the Pacific slope, but certainly by no means his inferior in ferocity or cunning.

### TYPOGRAPHICAL TRIPPINGS.

READERS blessed with a keen appreciation of the ridiculous have to thank remiss 'readers' of another sort for much unlooked-for amusement. Erring compositors have a knack of blundering as felicitously as though some mischief-loving sprite ruled the work of type-setting, and impelled the perpetration of mistakes looking exceedingly like premeditated jokes. One cannot help being a little suspicious when a tender-hearted politician is made to declare he would rather the Russians stabbed their horses in the Bosphorus, than that the Turks should be permitted to exercise their cruel propensities unchecked; a temperance-advocating bishop reported as exhorting his hearers not to give up the bottle; and a senator as expressing the wish that he had a widow in his bosom—possible as it may be that the conversion of 'stabbed' into 'stabbed,' 'battle' into 'bottle,' and 'window' into 'widow,' came about quite accidentally, without malice aforethought.

We can sympathise with Mr Proctor's dismay upon finding himself responsible for 'links, bonds, and stripes for the violent kind of spectres,' in a paper on Spectroscopic Photography, when what he had written was, 'lines, bands, and striæ near the violet end of the spectra.'

Swift's *Battle of the Rooks*, Macaulay's *Laps of Ancient Rome*, Palmer and Drake's *Dessert of Exodus*, have been priced in a bookseller's list; and a work on block-printing catalogued as containing 'sixty-nine engravings either from wood or metal, twelve of which have been inscriptions, representing scenes of Christian mythology, figures of patriarchs, saints, devils, and other dignitaries of the Church.' For the last, we cannot hold the printer blamable; but he is assuredly answerable for the chronological impossibility involved in the announcement for sale of 'an old *History of England* by Hume (published in 1767), from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to Revolution 1868.' By another mis-handling of figures, an inquiring correspondent was informed that an Act for abolishing Gretna Green marriages was passed in 1856, and came in force on the 1st of January 1837. 'Trifling with figures is a thing to be avoided. The Hamburg almanac for 1880 announced the holding of the February horse-fair on the 4th instead of the 24th of that month; and the influx of horses and horse-dealers into the city upon the first-named day caused much perturbation to the authorities, who, ignorant of the blunder of the almanac-mongers, had made no arrangements for the reception of the visitors. They got over the difficulty, to their own and everybody else's satisfaction; but ordained that henceforth no

almanac should be published until it had received official certification.

Journalists nowadays give such free play to their invention, that the credulity of newspaper readers is sufficiently taxed without asking them to believe that certain causes were heard in the Common Fleas Division; that the Copenhagen police intercepted a box of Orsini bonds on its way to Princess Thyra as a wedding-gift; that one summer day at Coventry there was 'a fresh freeze, and the heat eighty-four in the shade'; that two hundred tenant-farmers went to a farm near Loughrea, belonging to a 'suspect' in Galway jail, and cut, bound, and stacked four acres of cats (for 'cats'); and that Professor Virchow, on his appearance upon the platform at the International Congress, was greeted with an oration from a very large number of friends; that 'the snouts of ten thousand Democrats rent the air' at an open-air demonstration.

According to a newspaper report of the last royal progress to Westminster, 'Gold Stick' was ousted from his accustomed place in the procession by 'The Old Stick'; an official who might have done his sovereign good service when 'The Queen drove two cows to visit the King and Queen of Denmark at Lisburne House,' though Her Majesty might drive *through Coves* without his assistance. Just before the General Election, one of the organs of Her Majesty's Opposition announced that the Liberals of Marylebone had repaired all the breeches in their ranks, and buckled on the armour of battle. Another public instructor lately informed us that among the works of art to be seen in London streets were 'the statutes of King George III. with his pigtail, in Pall Mall, and of the Duke of Bedford ploughing in his ducal robes in Russell Square'; while among less curious news items we read of a ship becoming a perfect rock; of the purchase of a plot of land for the Ionic Sol Fa College; of a builder charged with not doing his work in a proper way, 'nor had the copings, coigns, been made of stones, bricks, or other inflammable material,' and of a dead man who 'bore an accidental character, and the jury returned a verdict of excellent death.' In a mining-camp story, a player at poker deals himself a bigger hand than ever the Heathen Chinee could accomplish, namely, 'both bowers and the king, besides two acres'; and another story-teller says: 'At the gate, an honest tar, with one wooden leg, and suspiciously ample nether garments, craved arms; blunders of which the writers were as innocent as the Philadelphian editor who found himself obliged to apologise for stating that a man who died in the street had been kicked up by a policeman, through the compositor taking the liberty of substituting a *k* for a *p*, with as little respect for an 'editorial' as that shown by his brother-typos, to whom we are indebted for 'Happy is the country which has no animals,' 'Master M'Grath (the famous greyhound) is a good god,' and 'American preachers pay great attention to manner, but British preachers pray very little.'

When editors themselves suffer at their printers' hands, mere advertisers cannot expect to escape. A music-master desiring the public should know that his system of instruction extended from the primary elements to thorough-bass, saw



himself described as the exponent of a method extending from primeval liniments to thoroughbore. The members of a Quartette Society discovered all too late that 'When married wretches sink to sleep,' did duty in their programme for 'When wearied wretches sink to sleep.' A patent-medicine vendor found himself lauding the virtues of 'Live Pills;' and a waste-paper dealer who advertised for old ledgers had occasion to wonder how many landladies would respond to the tempting offer of so much per hundredweight for 'lodgers without covers.' Sometimes the victimised advertiser has had reason to be grateful to the wrongdoer. On the night of the first performance of *The Woman in Red* at a country theatre, the house was packed, much to the surprise of the manageress, who had not found the townsfolk very eager for theatricals. She discovered next day that the play had been misprinted *The Woman in Bed*.

Sometimes things get mixed, and nicely too, if not quite so neatly as was done by the printer of a Canadian newspaper who tagged part of a recipe for tomato catsup on the opening paragraph of an article on Catholicism in Africa, with the following result: 'The Roman Catholics claim to be making material advances in Africa, especially in Algeria, where they have a hundred and eighty-five thousand adherents, and a missionary society for Central Africa. During the past three years they have obtained a firm footing in the interior of the continent, and have sent forth several missionaries into the equatorial regions. They are accustomed to begin their work by buying heathen children and educating them. The easiest and best way to prepare them is to first wipe them with a clean towel; then place them in dripping pans and bake them until they are tender. Then you will have no difficulty in rubbing them through a sieve, and will save them by being obliged to cut them in slices and cook for several hours.'

An atmospherical phenomenon was witnessed in the west of England in October 1880, which must have been of a very remarkable nature, if we may accept a local journal's description of it as correct. It ran thus: 'A singular phenomenon was observed in the sky last night. A blue Police Court charged with stealing a quantity of apples. The prosecutor said he had been the victim of frequent robberies, and in the eastern horizon it disappeared amidst a shower of sparks. The sight was witnessed from the bridge by a large number of spectators, and the Bench were unanimously of opinion that no case had been proved and dismissed the sky was clear, the temperature low, and very little wind blowing.' Still better, or worse, as an example, of printer's mixture, was the announcement given forth by one of the London dailies: 'Her Royal Highness Princess Louise arrived this evening in the Duke of Argyll's steam yacht *Columbia*. Her Royal Highness, who was received on landing by Lady Evelyn Campbell, drove immediately suffering from typhus fever, and told her mother it was an attack of gout.' This was too bad, yet the Princess was not more hardly treated than the heir to the throne, of whom a Scottish newspaper said: 'The Prince of Wales, who had accepted an invitation to shoot in France with

the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Bisaccia, has telegraphed that owing to imperative circumstances, his visit must be postponed. Magistrate issued a distress warrant against his goods.'

#### A HOLIDAY EPISODE.

On a glorious October morning, the writer, in company with other excursionists bound for Westward Ho, found himself upon the Ilfracombe pier, awaiting the arrival of the Swansea steamer. The day promised to be a most enjoyable one; a bright clear sun was shining overhead, its hot rays being pleasantly tempered by the delicious freshness of the ocean spray, dashing at intervals high over the pier-head. Long white fleecy clouds lay in streamers along the horizon, moving steadily across the sky under the coaxing influence of a stiff north-westerly breeze, which at times caused the feathery crests of the billows to rise gracefully in the offing, in picturesque relief to the dark blue foreground of the Bristol Channel. At length a faint wreath of smoke in the direction of the Mumbles announced the approach of the overdue steamer, her labouring movements and the glistening condition of her paddle-boxes as she eased up alongside the pier half an hour later, telling of the heavy seas she had encountered in crossing.

Nothing daunted, however, by such dispiriting signs, the passengers were soon crowding her deck; and backing astern, she slowly swung round, and commenced her journey down Channel. The fluttering white handkerchiefs on the fast receding pier grew fainter and fainter; and crossing the romantic cove of Wildersmouth, we experienced the first evidences of the rough sea, in the obstinate pitching of our little steamer. With a strong head-wind, she wavered as she rose upon the crest of a wave, until the succeeding billow striking her before she had time to dip into the hollow, caused her to quiver with the smartness of the blow. The majority of us, however, appeared to be fair sailors; and if any felt uneasy in their minds, they yet summoned up sufficient courage to stifle such at this early period of our voyage. Hugging the coast, we made progress past the Tors, with the charming walks dotted here and there with tiny specks, recognisable as pedestrians, evidently engrossed with the erratic motions of our steamer. An hour's struggle with the tide and head-wind brought us at length off Morte Point, one of the most dreaded spots on this rugged coast. A tremendous 'race' sets in here from off the sides of Lundy Island, and breaks with terrific force upon the eastern headland of Bideford Bay. We recalled it as being the scene of many a terrible shipwreck; in one year, five vessels rapidly followed each other here to destruction.

Upon clearing this point, a wide curve of land now met our view; and the full force of the Atlantic billows, having a clear sweep of nearly ten miles to shore, caused our small vessel to roll uncomfortably, and very sensibly diminished the number of passengers on deck. The huge green rollers careering majestically shoreward, presented a thrilling spectacle. Westward Ho, we were informed, lay somewhere in the centre of the extensive curve; but the distance which intervened prevented it from being clearly sighted. The

neck of sea on our extreme left indicated the estuary formed by the junction of the rivers Taw and Torridge, out of which, in former days, the heroes of Devon sailed forth upon their famed explorations. We had now reached the middle of the Bay, and the picturesque village of Clovelly appeared in front; the long steep line of houses sharply defined against the dark ridge on which it rests, gave it, at a distance, a striking resemblance to a tiny waterfall.

Suddenly, our paddle-wheels were stopped; and upon inquiry, we learned that the captain had abandoned his intention of going to Westward Ho, in consequence of the threatening aspect of the weather, which had now grown worse, and suggested that we should make for Clovelly, as it afforded snug shelter in its little harbour. As most of the passengers, from the state of the weather, were unable to form any determination other than that of reaching *terra firma* as soon as possible, they willingly assented to the captain's suggestion; and accordingly the order was given to steer for Clovelly. This, however, was greatly annoying to myself, as I had friends at Westward Ho whom I was most anxious to visit. Going forward, I endeavoured in vain to shake the captain's determination; and the only concession I could gain was the order peremptorily given to his men to 'put me ashore then, and give me a ducking.'

Silently, therefore, with this contingency hanging over me, I took my seat in the boat lowered for me. We had a good five or six miles' pull to shore; and the two bronzed tars who accompanied me improved the opportunity by naively observing they doubted whether we should be able to land. Being no stranger to the delicate idioms of a sailor's speech, I placed my hand in my pocket; and under the magic spell of a silver tip, the boat seemed to shoot more rapidly through the water. As we repeatedly rose on the crest of the swelling hillocks, the elegant outlines of the pier loomed out more distinctly every moment, and I could shortly discern the forest of heads crowding its top, evidently most interested in our approach, but greatly mystified as to the nature of the situation. With a few more strong pulls, we were under the shadow of the pier of Westward Ho; and obeying instructions, I stood up in the boat. Waiting until a more favourable billow reached us, we were carried forward on its green crest. 'Jump now!' simultaneously shouted the boatmen; and mechanically springing forward in the direction of the pier, I fortunately succeeded in grasping the iron taffrail of the ladder, while the boat swept swiftly from underneath. Scrambling beyond the reach of the succeeding wave, I was saluted with ropes, life-buoys, and outstretched arms waiting to receive me; and reached the top amid the enthusiastic welcome of the assembled spectators, where, breathless with my exertions, I endeavoured to explain the non-arrival of the steamer, which still lay rolling obstinately in the offing.

The cause of this most singular reception was partly explained by the fact, that the writer was the first and, as subsequent events proved, the only passenger who ever landed at that pier, as the unfortunate structure was shortly afterwards swept away during a storm of unprecedented violence.

## EASTER GREETING.

FROM THE GERMAN OF KARL VON GEROK.

'Why weepest thou?' How soft the words come stealing!  
What greeting, blessed Magdalene, is this?  
Fraught are its accents with a wondrous healing;  
They still thine anguish like a mother's kiss!  
Methinks I hear that voice as thou didst now—  
'Why weepest thou?'

'Why weepest thou?' So breathes the balmy air  
After the winter frosts, this sweet spring day;  
The blooming fields, the flow'ers rich and fair,  
The golden sunshine drive thy cares away;  
All nature sings in cadence sweet and low—  
'Why weepest thou?'

'Why weepest thou?' Dost thou thy Lord bemoan?  
His precious body has the false world ta'en;  
O see! not death could keep Him from His own;  
Victorious o'er the grave He comes again,  
And tenderly His dear voice asks thee now—  
'Why weepest thou?'

'Why weepest thou?' The world afflicts thee sore!  
O see! Him, too, they thrust the cold grave under,  
And placed their watchers on the gate before,  
And yet with mighty strength He brake asunder.  
Dost thou then think that now God's wonders sleep?  
Why dost thou weep?

'Why dost thou weep?' Dost thou thy sins bemoan?  
Is that the stone at which thy soul doth quiver?  
O see! in His dear eyes is love alone;  
Our sins lie hidden in His grave for ever!  
O dread Him not, and lull thy fears to sleep;  
Why shouldst thou weep?

'Why shouldst thou weep?' Is it that thou dost mourn  
That over thee the cloud of grief is seen?  
O see! how bright the glorious Easter dawn  
Is rising on the fatal Easter e'en.  
Trust, pray, and hope, nor 'neath thy burden bow—  
Why weepest thou?

'Why weepest thou?' Dost thou bemoan the dead?  
Here is but earth that back to earth was given;  
Seek not the Immortal in this narrow bed,  
The spirit soared on angels' wings to heaven;  
One day, and He will break the grave's charmed sleep—  
Why dost thou weep?

'Why dost thou weep?' Poor pilgrim, burdened sore,  
After these weary years, wouldst thou be home?  
O see! thy gentle Lord is gone before,  
And waiteth till His little child shall come;  
Then thou, too, surely thy reward shalt reap—  
Why dost thou weep?

'Why dost thou weep?' Aye Lord, one drop of peace  
Thou canst in every cup of sorrow pour;  
And though on earth my grief shall never cease,  
Soon shalt Thou dry these tears for evermore;  
Then shall the angels sing: 'O mortal, now—  
Why weepest thou?'

ANTONIA DICKSON.

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